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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Radio Service — OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT Monday, May 1, 1939.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "THIS IS THE FOREST PRIMEVAL." Information from the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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May Day is Arbor Day in many states. Suggesting trees, as it does, one's thought carries over quite naturally to forests. I'm reminded of Henry Van Dyke, who said,

"There are three vines that grow only in the ancient forest. Eating the berries of one, you grow wise in the wisdom of flowers. The fruit of another brings the wisdom of the birds. The third bears neither flower nor fruit, but if you find its leaves it is your fortune; if you taste them you are saved. For then the enchantment of tree-land enters your heart; the charm of the wildwood flows forever through your veins; in bustling office or noisy solitude of crowded streets you long for the friendly forest. This third vine is Wood Magic."

Wood Magic is to be found in our 158 National Forests, administered by the U.S. Forest Service. Every year more than 30 million people avail themselves of the opportunity to search for Wood Magic- to enjoy trees, rugged mountains, soft valleys, alluring streams, lakes, and other scenic attractions which have been preserved in all their natural beauty and made accessible by means of roads and trails.

I have spoken several times of the recreational facilities provided in our National Forests. Free use of campgrounds, pure water supply, fireplaces, rustic benches, and sanitary arrangements are provided in about 4,000 public areas. But in addition to the folks who like to camp in spots thus made more or less comfortable and civilized, and there are also a number of others who want to seek

their Wood Magic as their pioneer forefathers knew it. They prefer nature "in the raw"- without roads, trails, supply points, resorts, or summer homes. They want solitude, and the chance to pit their endurance and skill in woodcraft against the same obstacles that were met and conquered when this country was first settled. The outdoor recreations they enjoy were characteristic of that early period, and those who keep them alive now are preserving some of our national traditions.

Perhaps in your own family there are some who have this urge to visit "the forest primeval." Do they know that the Forest Service has recognized this need by setting aside 64 so-called "Wilderness Areas", containing some 13 million acres? In these areas primitive condition of environment, transportation, habitation, and subsistence will be maintained permanently. No roads will be built, except in rare cases where there is need to move fire-fighting personnel and equipment. There will be no summer resorts, dude ranches, public campgrounds, or permanent summer home-sites. No gas stations or barbecue stands. Except for watch towers of lonely fire-men on peaks or cliffs, man's handiwork is hid from view. Transportation is by saddle horse, or "shank's mare", or, in some cases, by canoe. Much of the area to be explored will require going on foot, with a pack on the back, and a compass in the pocket. Wilderness areas are not for the "tenderfoot", of course.

Each "Wilderness area" has been carefully chosen and is an integral part of the National Forest which surrounds it, but which has been made more accessible. Fifty-seven of the 68 United States peaks which are 14,000 feet high or more lie on National Forests, challenging those who want rugged mountains to climb. Many of these peaks are in the primitive areas.

Forty of the wilderness areas are wholly within National Forests. They are mostly in the mountainous western states. The U.S. Forest Service has just announced that within the Superior National Forest in Minnesota there is an area of 109,392 acres- or 170 square miles- which has been designated as the Little Indian Sioux

Roadless area. More than 15,000 acres of this new roadless area are water surface. Visitors entering this area will travel only in canoes or boats or on foot. They will use essentially the same transportation as that used by the landlooker, timber estimator, and ore prospector of half a century ago.

The roadless area, says the U.S. Forest Service, is undeveloped wilderness, favorable for wildlife, particularly deer and moose as well as fur bearers. Many of the canoe routes are navigable because of dams and ponds constructed by beavers. Furs taken out of the area are valued at thousands of dollars annually. Last year the government planted over 9 million fingerlings from Federal fish hatcheries. Hunting and fishing will be permitted in the area subject to state laws.

This roadless area is unlike the wilderness areas in that timber may be cut within it, but only under selective cutting plans directed by the Forest Service. No permits will be issued for resorts, summer homes, or semi-permanent shelters. Where sanitary measures are required to protect public health, a few campgrounds may be established. On the whole, however, this canoeist's paradise is planned as a retreat from the world of modern mechanization.

I said the National Forests provide "Wilderness Areas" for the adventurous souls of stout physique and considerable free time; also, that there are about 4,000 public campgrounds and resorts for the 30 million with limited holiday time at their disposal who visit the forests for week-ends and short vacations.

The needs of still another group are being provided for as fast as funds permit. This is the low-income group which has a real need of simple, healthful recreation but scarcely any money to spare for it. You know, I suppose, that nearly half of all the families in the United States have an annual income of only $1,000 or less. The Forest Service feels that the national forests should be made more readily available to this group, but in many cases the cost of reaching free national-forest campgrounds and of stopping there is too great. So the Forest Service is constructing organization camps where groups of people can take care of themselves at minimum cost. Welfare organizations like farm and labor unions, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls and 4-H Clubs may arrange for the use of these special camps. These camps are not a new idea. Several municipalities have maintained comparable camps on National Forests, on a sound financial basis and at small cost to the persons or organizations using them. Civic and other welfare organizations often provide transportation to these camps. So their construction is given high priority in the National Forest program, and the underprivileged will also be able to glimpse the forest primeval and be touched by Wood Magic.

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